FIRST COMICS™
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E-MAN

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Staton

THE SLUG THAT ATE BARRENTOWN?

FIRST NOTES

FUNNY HOW TIME FLIES

It was nearly a year ago when I sat down at the typewriter to write the first First Notes column. At that time we were full of all sorts of hopes and dreams about this fantastic new comic book company.

Well, we're *still* full of hopes and dreams, but they're dreams about our new futures. We've had a fantastic year — in one short year, we've developed a reputation for on-time delivery with the highest production standards. We've worked with some of the best, and we've received their best work.

There are a lot of people to thank.

We've already noted — in house ads and in fanzines — the many artists, writers and staff people with whom we have worked. But there are still others: behind the scenes people who are equally responsible for our success. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention as many of these fine folks as possible.

There are three guys who have been there right from the beginning, people who worked hand-in-glove with Rick, Rick and myself to get First Comics off the ground: Ken Levin, Ralph Musicant, and Jeff Stolberg. We owe them a hell of a lot more than just our thanks.

In addition to First's distributors and retailers, there are a whole mess of people without whom First could never have made it. This list includes Stuart Abelson, Adrienne Breen, Tom Brejcha, Terry Chapman, Myron Cherry, Lynn Danford, Ann DeLarye, Jeff Diemand, Russ Ernst, Agnes Felber, Barbara Felber, Angelo Frazone, Don Glickman, Art Greenberg, Bob Greenberger, Peggy Hoberg, Noah Levin, Robert Levin, Joel Levine, Dorothy Metrick, Harry Newberger, Linda Pollak, David Rosenthal, Lucy Southard, Daniel Sternberg, Max Traub, Katherine Turner, Donald Turner, Richard Ungaretti, Simon Zreczny, and Jack Zoldan.

Whew.

FINDING FIRST

If you've become used to finding **Warp** on sale along with **Jon Sable, Freelance** and **American Flagg!**, don't freak. Last month we shifted over to a new distribution system where you'll be finding new First Comics three out of every four weeks of each month. **Jon Sable, Freelance** and **American Flagg!** are released about the middle of the month, **Warp** and **Mars** the week after that, and **E-Man** and **Starslayer** come out the very end of each month.

If you're having any difficulties finding First Comics at your favorite outlet, please let us know. Write to Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager, First Comics, Inc., 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201 — and, please, include the name and address of the comics shop in question.

MEETING THE MASSES

If pressed to do so, I guess we could come up with a complete list of conventions we've been to in the past three months. Let me give it a shot:

Indianapolis, Charlotte, New York, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Chicago, Memphis, Houston, San Diego, Atlanta, St. Louis. Whew. Not bad. Eleven conventions in about fourteen weeks. Lord knows where we got the time to continue publishing comics on-time.

Doing conventions is a blast. We greatly enjoy the opportunity to meet the people who keep us in business. More importantly, we enjoy the opportunity to *listen* to your thoughts — to your likes and dislikes, to your ideas and your concerns.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who visited us at the sundry summer conventions — as well as those of you who have visited us at our various comics shops appearances ... and those of you who have taken the effort to write to our various letters columns.

We want your input, and, believe me, we really listen to your comments.

— Mike Gold

ON SALE NOW

Starslayer #13: **John Ostrander, Lenin Delsol** and **Bruce Patterson** conclude our sundry plotlines in "Tamara Stands Alone!" Plus: the second part of the latest Grimjack thriller — and we do mean thriller — "Buried Past," by Ostrander and **Timothy Truman!**

American Flagg! #5: "Sudden Death Overtime," the second chapter of **Howard Chaykin's** Southern Comfort Saga. Flagg's in Cuba escorting the clandestine basketball team, and he's surrounded by thousands of fans — and thousands of killers. Some days, you just can't win.

Jon Sable, Freelance #9: "Cliffhanger" — this time, with real cliffs. Now that Jon Sable has cleared his client of theft charges, he's just got enough time to prevent the nuclear destruction of New York City. **Mike Grell** concludes the two-parter.

Mars #2: Morgana explores her strange new world, but is totally unprepared to respond when "Mars Attacks!" **Mark Wheatley** and **Marc Hempel** continue this year's most innovative comic. Plus: the premiere of First's strangest superhero, The Black Flame — by **Peter Gillis, Tom Sutton** and **Bruce Patterson.**

Warp #10: Welcome **Jerry Bingham** to the pencilling chores as he, **Peter Gillis** and **Mike Gustovich** begin the first post-adaptation saga: "The Choices of Mistress Sargon!". And you thought our heroes were boxed in! Plus: the Outrider returns to Fen-Ra!

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator

Richard Felber, Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

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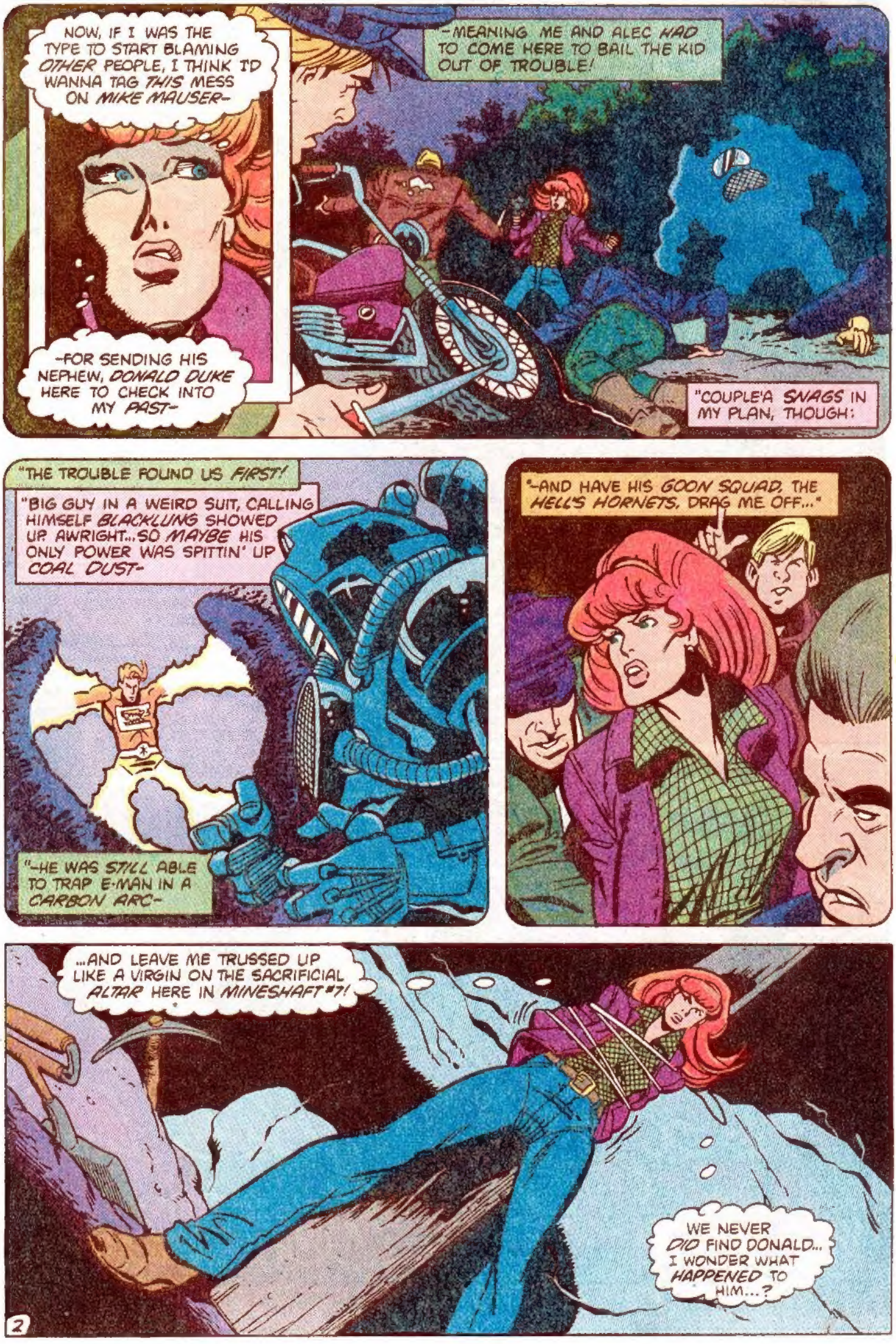
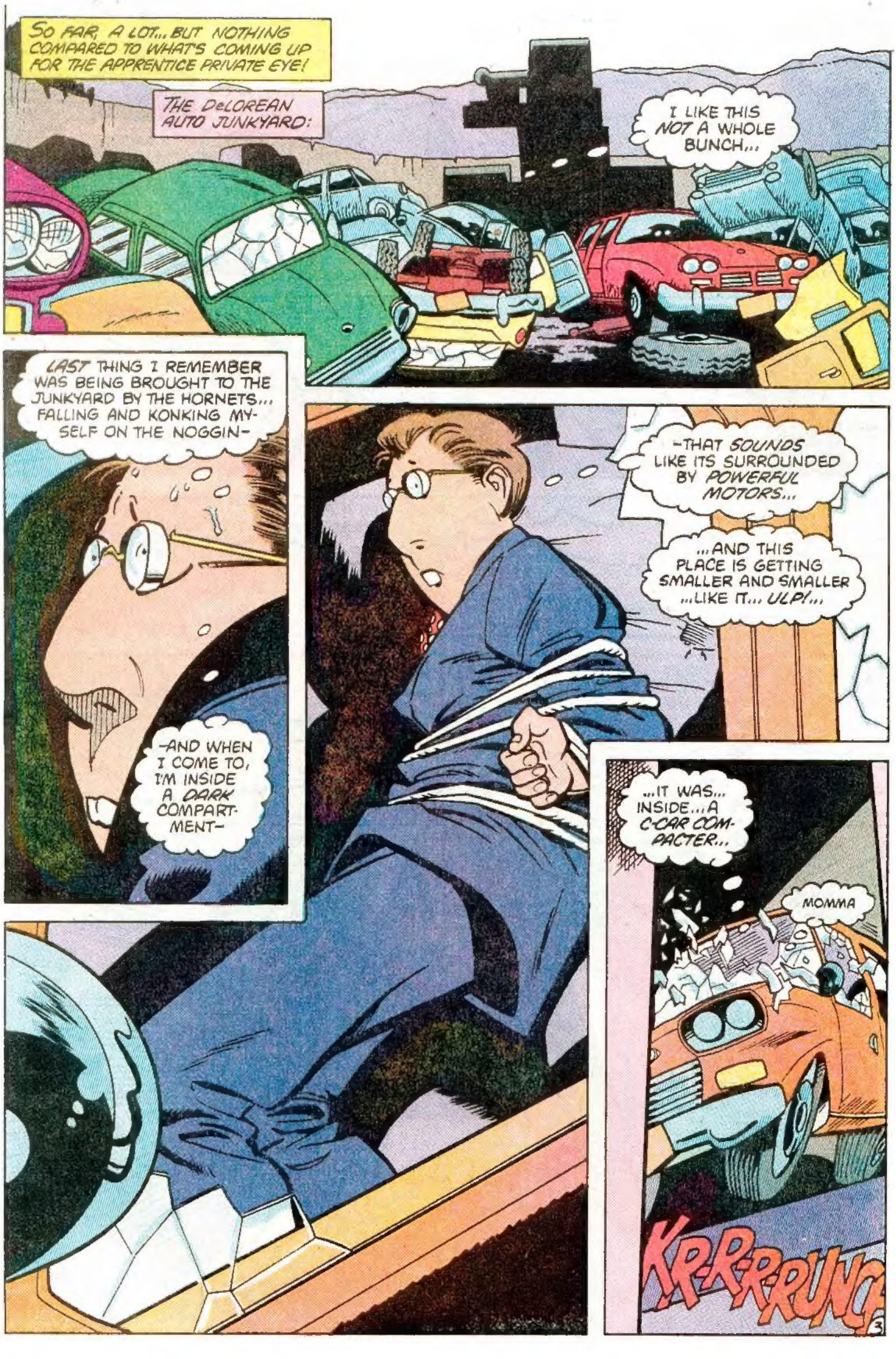
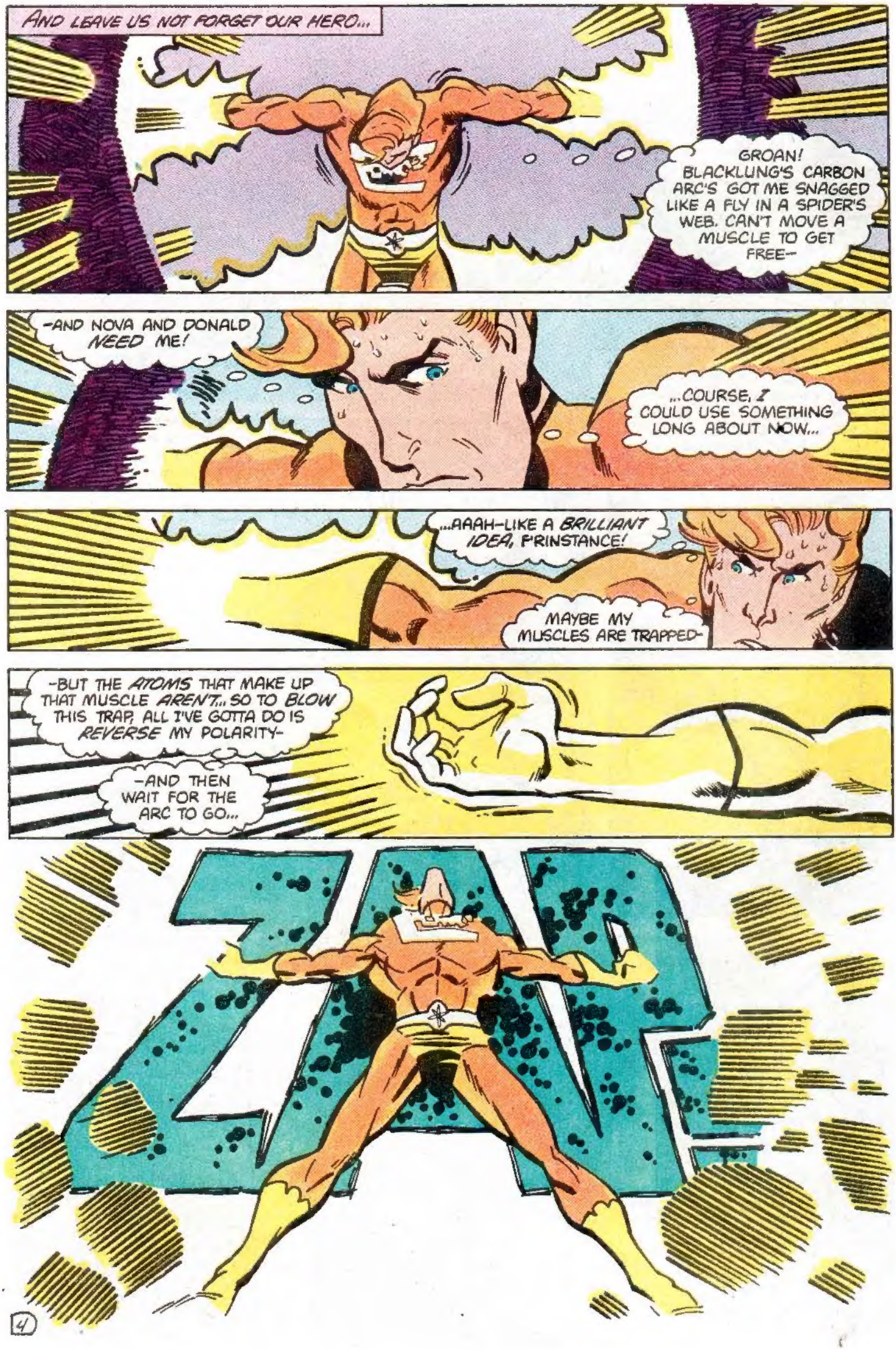
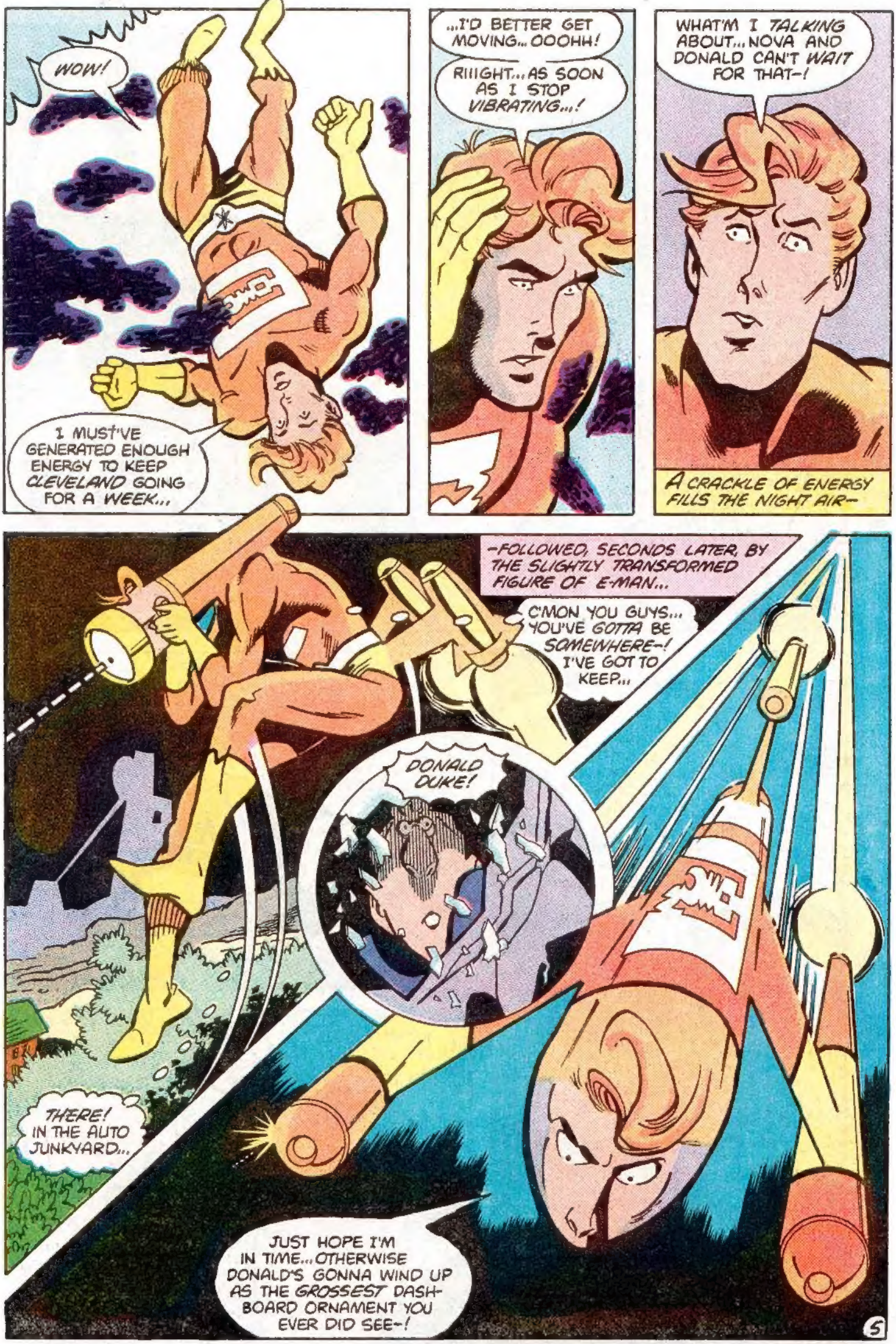
A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

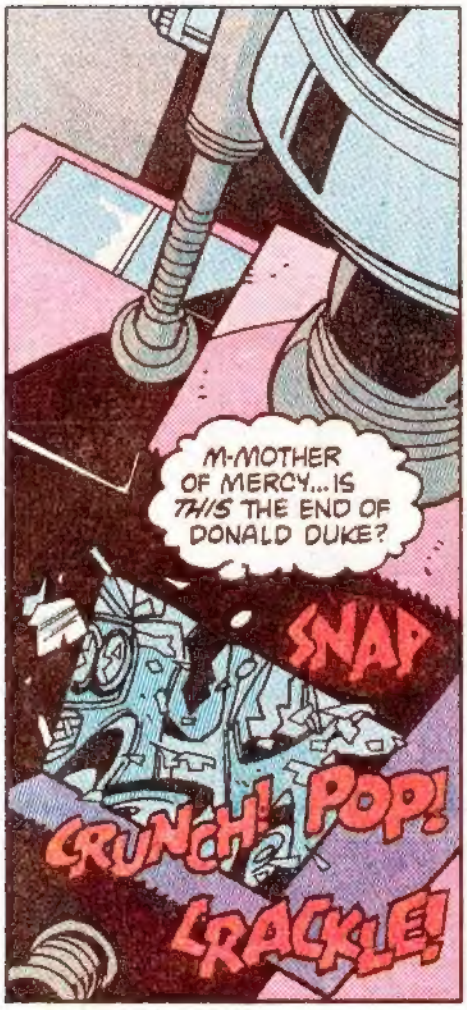
BARRENTOWN, PA:
WELCOME HOME, NOVA KANE...
CREATED by NICOLA CUTI and JOE STATON
...OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY... KATRINKA KOLCNZSKI? THAT'S THE NAME I WAS BORN WITH-
-BUT I HAVEN'T EVEN THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS THAT FOR YEARS! BUT... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE... NO MATTER WHAT I CALL MYSELF-
-I'M ABOUT TO BE TURNED INTO SO MUCH "PURINA MONSTER CHOW!"
The SLUG that ATE Barrentown?
PAUL KUPPERBERG WORDS
JOE STATON PLOT & PENCILS
RICK BURCHETT INKS
KEN BRUZENAK LETTERS
WENDY FIORE COLORS
MIKE GOLD EDITS

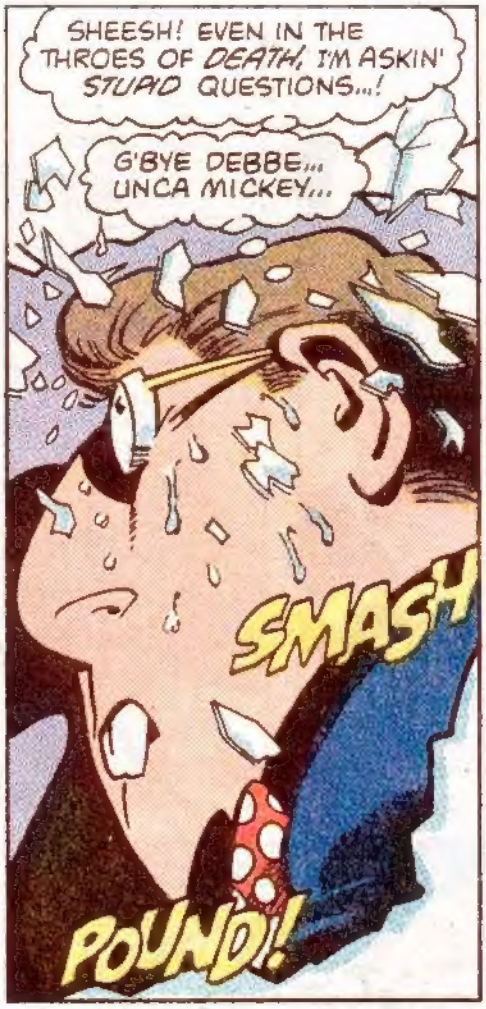

NOW, IF I WAS THE TYPE TO START BLAMING OTHER PEOPLE, I THINK I'D WANNA TAG THIS MESS ON MIKE MAUSER-
-FOR SENDING HIS NEPHEW, DONALD DUKE HERE TO CHECK INTO MY PAST-
-MEANING ME AND ALEC HAD TO COME HERE TO BAIL THE KID OUT OF TROUBLE!
"COUPLE'A SNAGS IN MY PLAN, THOUGH:
"THE TROUBLE FOUND US FIRST!
"BIG GUY IN A WEIRD SUIT, CALLING HIMSELF BLACKLUNG SHOWED UP AWRIGHT... SO MAYBE HIS ONLY POWER WAS SPITTIN' UP COAL DUST-
"-HE WAS STILL ABLE TO TRAP E-MAN IN A CARBON ARC-
"-AND HAVE HIS GOON SQUAD, THE HELL'S HORNETS, DRAG ME OFF..."
...AND LEAVE ME TRUSSED UP LIKE A VIRGIN ON THE SACRIFICIAL ALTAR HERE IN MINESHAFT #7!
WE NEVER DID FIND DONALD... I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM...?
2

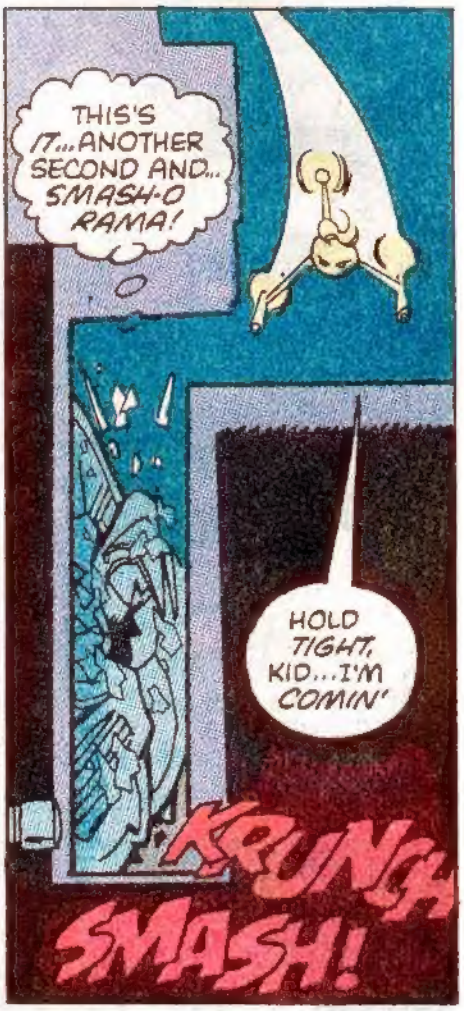

SO FAR, A LOT... BUT NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT'S COMING UP FOR THE APPRENTICE PRIVATE EYE!
THE DeLOREAN AUTO JUNKYARD:
I LIKE THIS NOT A WHOLE BUNCH...
LAST THING I REMEMBER WAS BEING BROUGHT TO THE JUNKYARD BY THE HORNETS... FALLING AND KONKING MYSELF ON THE NOGGIN-
-AND WHEN I COME TO, I'M INSIDE A DARK COMPARTMENT-
-THAT SOUNDS LIKE ITS SURROUNDED BY POWERFUL MOTORS...
...AND THIS PLACE IS GETTING SMALLER AND SMALLER ...LIKE IT... ULP!...
...IT WAS... INSIDE... A C-CAR COMPACTER...
MOMMA
KR-R-R-RUNCH
3


AND LEAVE US NOT FORGET OUR HERO...
GROAN! BLACKLUNG'S CARBON ARC'S GOT ME SNAGGED LIKE A FLY IN A SPIDER'S WEB. CAN'T MOVE A MUSCLE TO GET FREE--
-AND NOVA AND DONALD NEED ME!
...COURSE, I COULD USE SOMETHING LONG ABOUT NOW...
...AAAH-LIKE A BRILLIANT IDEA, PRINSTANCE!
MAYBE MY MUSCLES ARE TRAPPED-
-BUT THE ATOMS THAT MAKE UP THAT MUSCLE AREN'T... SO TO BLOW THIS TRAP, ALL I'VE GOTTA DO IS REVERSE MY POLARITY-
-AND THEN WAIT FOR THE ARC TO GO...
ZAP
4

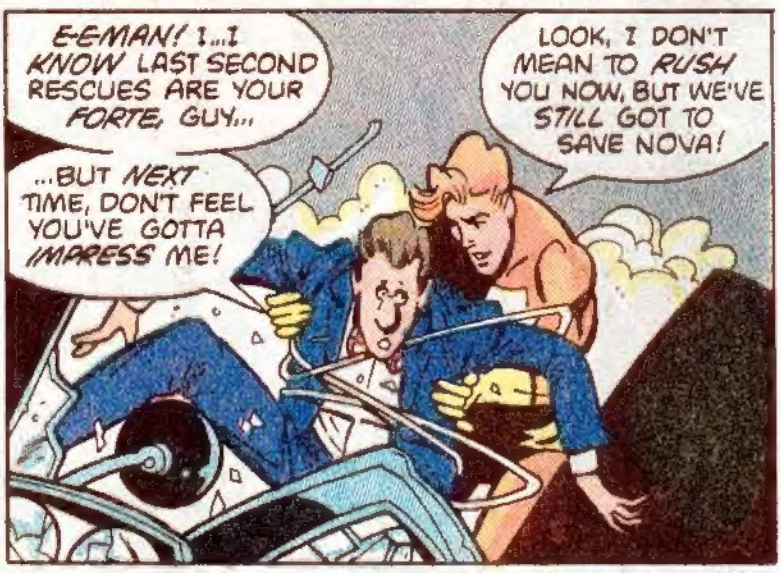

WOW!
I MUST'VE GENERATED ENOUGH ENERGY TO KEEP CLEVELAND GOING FOR A WEEK...
...I'D BETTER GET MOVING... OOOHH!
RIIIGHT... AS SOON AS I STOP VIBRATING...!
WHAT'M I TALKING ABOUT... NOVA AND DONALD CAN'T WAIT FOR THAT-!
A CRACKLE OF ENERGY FILLS THE NIGHT AIR-
-FOLLOWED, SECONDS LATER, BY THE SLIGHTLY TRANSFORMED FIGURE OF E-MAN...
C'MON YOU GUYS... YOU'VE GOTTA BE SOMEWHERE-! I'VE GOT TO KEEP...
DONALD DUKE!
THERE! IN THE AUTO JUNKYARD...
JUST HOPE I'M IN TIME... OTHERWISE DONALD'S GONNA WIND UP AS THE GROSSEST DASH-BOARD ORNAMENT YOU EVER DID SEE-!

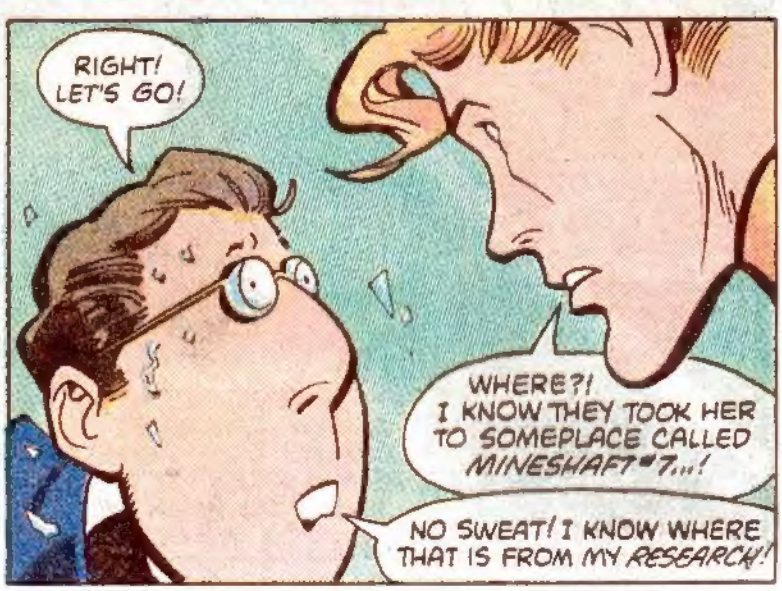

M-MOTHER OF MERCY... IS THIS THE END OF DONALD DUKE?
SNAP
CRUNCH! POP!
CRACKLE!

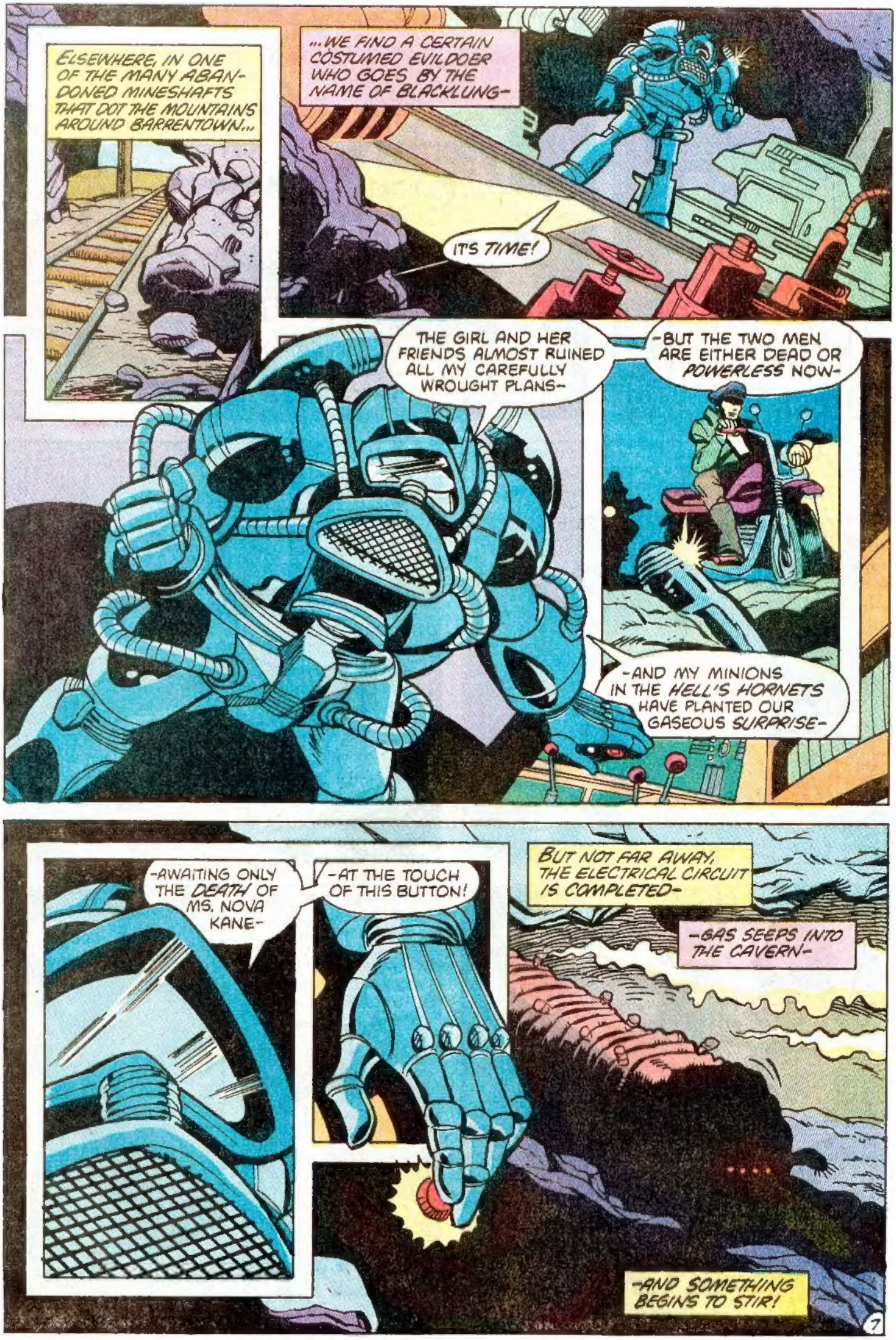

SHEESH! EVEN IN THE THROES OF DEATH, I'M ASKIN' STUPID QUESTIONS...!
G'BYE DEBBE... UNCA MICKEY...
SMASH
POUND!


THIS'S IT... ANOTHER SECOND AND... SMASH-O RAMA!
HOLD TIGHT, KID... I'M COMIN'
KRUNCH
SMASH!

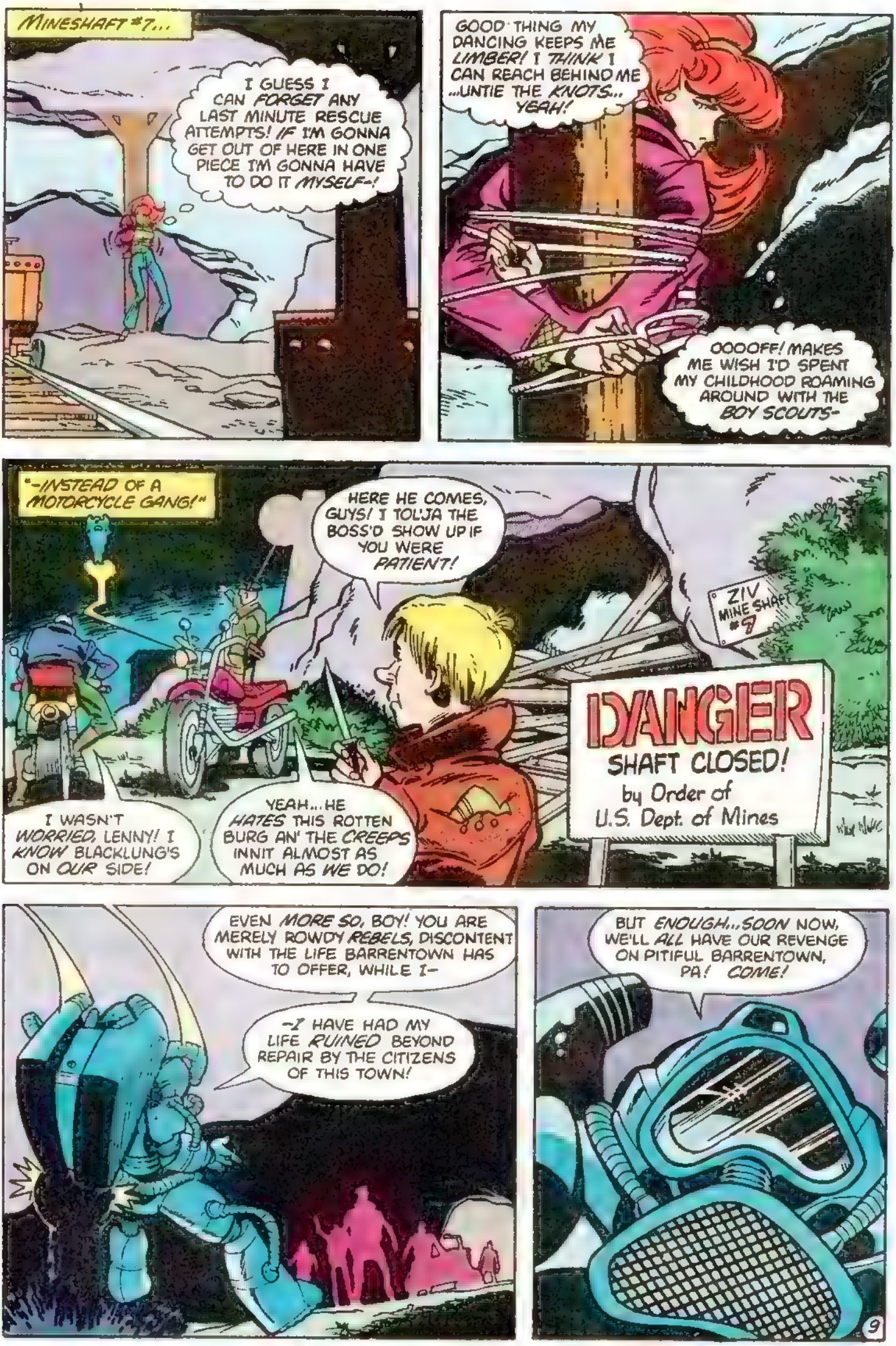
AND IN THE WINK OF AN EYE...
I KNOW THIS IS NO TIME TO BE, AHEM... SCREWING AROUND, BUT IT'S THE FASTEST WAY TO KEEP DONALD FROM BECOMING A PANCAKE!
GHAK!
6

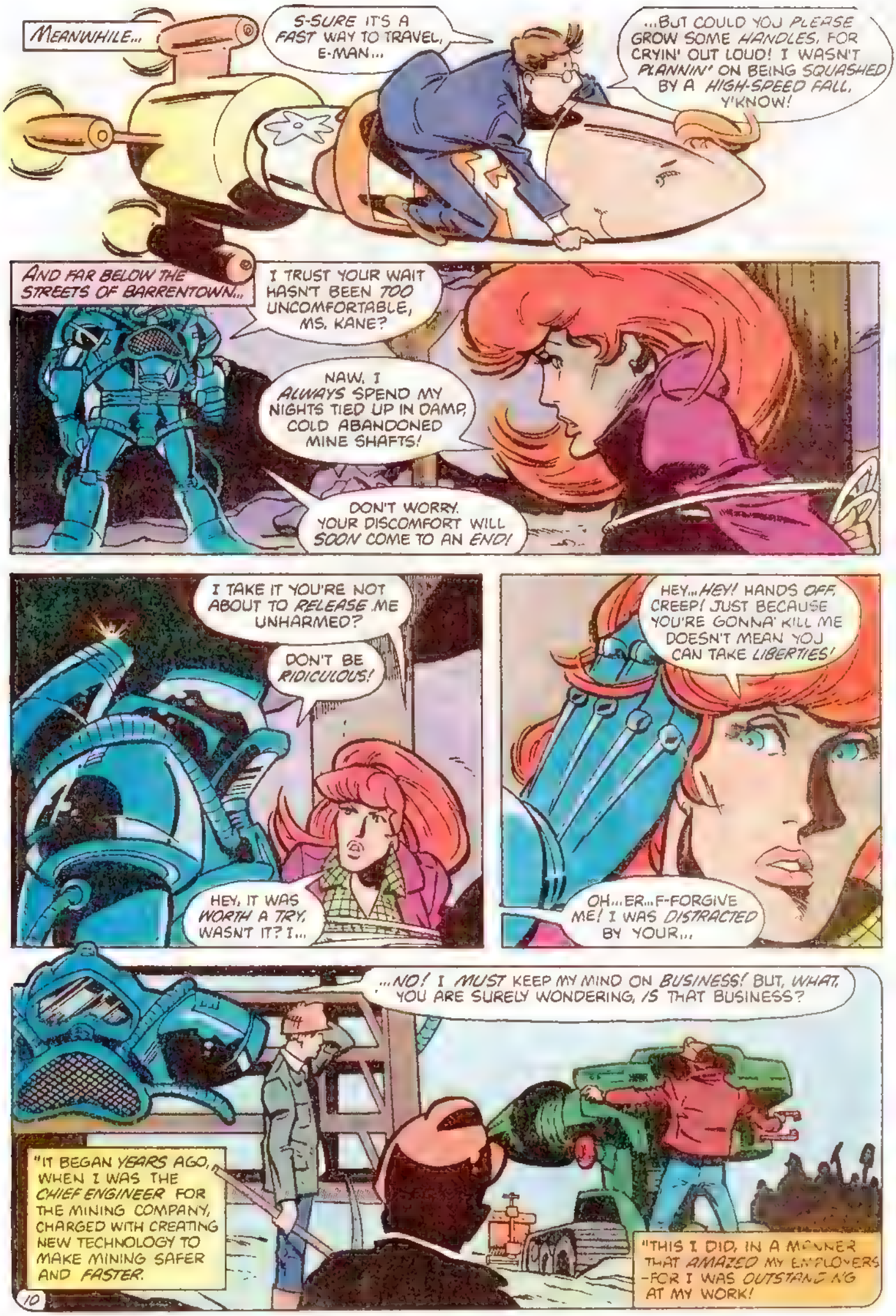

E-EMAN! I...I KNOW LAST SECOND RESCUES ARE YOUR FORTE, GUY...
...BUT NEXT TIME, DON'T FEEL YOU'VE GOTTA IMPRESS ME!
LOOK, I DON'T MEAN TO RUSH YOU NOW, BUT WE'VE STILL GOT TO SAVE NOVA!

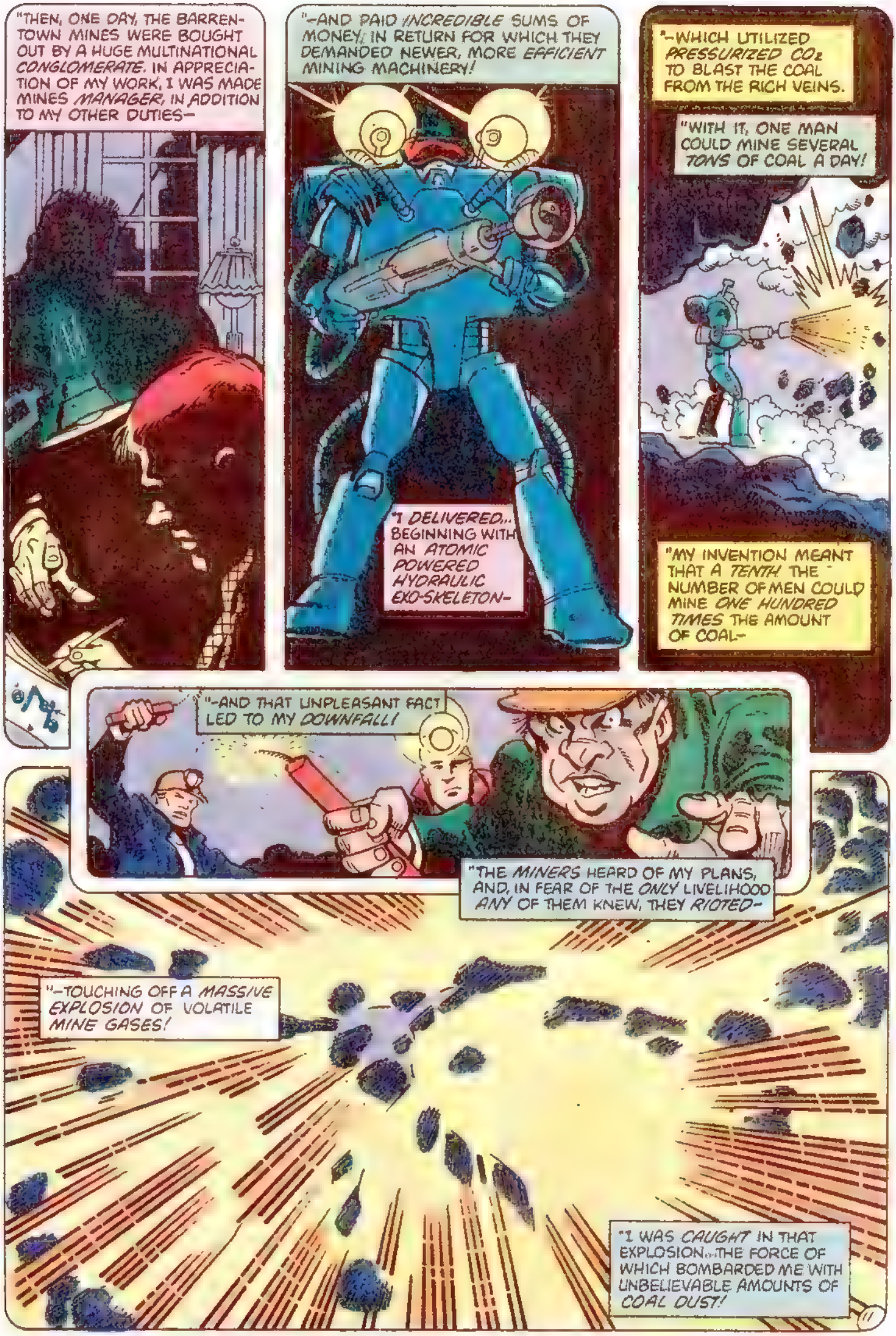

RIGHT! LET'S GO!
WHERE?! I KNOW THEY TOOK HER TO SOMEPLACE CALLED MINESHAFT #7...!
NO SWEAT! I KNOW WHERE THAT IS FROM MY RESEARCH!

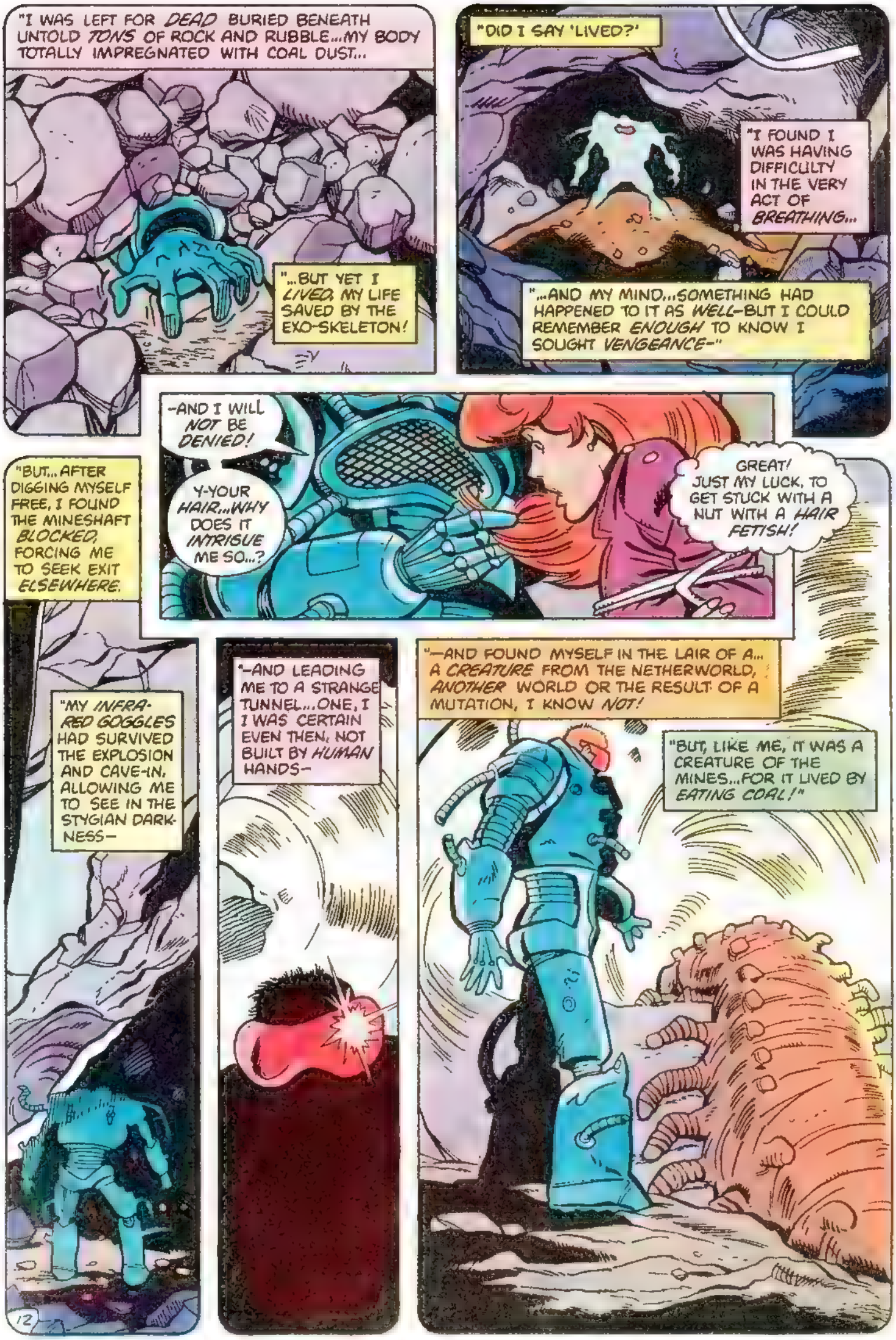

ELSEWHERE, IN ONE OF THE MANY ABANDONED MINESHAFTS THAT DOT THE MOUNTAINS AROUND BARRENTOWN...
...WE FIND A CERTAIN COSTUMED EVILDOER WHO GOES BY THE NAME OF BLACKLUNG-
IT'S TIME!
THE GIRL AND HER FRIENDS ALMOST RUINED ALL MY CAREFULLY WROUGHT PLANS-
-BUT THE TWO MEN ARE EITHER DEAD OR POWERLESS NOW-
-AND MY MINIONS IN THE HELL'S HORNETS HAVE PLANTED OUR GASEOUS SURPRISE-
-AWAITING ONLY THE DEATH OF MS. NOVA KANE-
-AT THE TOUCH OF THIS BUTTON!
BUT NOT FAR AWAY, THE ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT IS COMPLETED-
-GAS SEEPS INTO THE CAVERN-
-AND SOMETHING BEGINS TO STIR!

BEFORE THE ACTION GETS TOO HOT AND HEAVY FOR US TO HANDLE, LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION SOME MILES TO THE EAST-
FLO'S
CREDIT DENTIST
-AND THE NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF MIKE MAUSER, P.I....
MAUSER DETECTIVE AGENCY
NO CHECKS
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT, OPERATOR, THERE'S ONLY ONE HOTEL IN BARRENTOWN, SO I GUESS THAT IS THE ONE I WANT!
SHEESH! WOTTA BIMBETTE!
HIYA. LISSEN, I'M TRYIN' TO LOCATE A COUPLE OF FRIENDS OF MINE REGISTERED AT YOUR PLACE...
UH-HUH. DONALD DUKE, NOVA KANE AND ALEC TRONN...
YEAH, THAT'S THEM. ARE THEY...? OH... HAVEN'T SEEN 'EM ALL DAY, HUH?
(THANKS, SHORTY! THEM'S THE PAPERS I WANTED, ALRIGHT!)
SO, KIN I LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR...
BARRY JAMIE
...FOR... FOR... AAAHHH... NEVERMIND!
HOO-BOY!
NO CHECKS
IF...IF ONLY I KNEW I...I NEVER WOULDA' SENT THE KID...
MAN, IS HIS MOTHER EVER GONNA YELL AT ME-!
GLEEP?
MORE ON THIS IN THE FUTURE...
8


MINESHAFT #7...
I GUESS I CAN FORGET ANY LAST MINUTE RESCUE ATTEMPTS! IF I'M GONNA GET OUT OF HERE IN ONE PIECE I'M GONNA HAVE TO DO IT MYSELF-!
GOOD THING MY DANCING KEEPS ME LIMBER! I THINK I CAN REACH BEHIND ME ...UNTIE THE KNOTS... YEAH!
OOOOFF! MAKES ME WISH I'D SPENT MY CHILDHOOD ROAMING AROUND WITH THE BOY SCOUTS-
"-INSTEAD OF A MOTORCYCLE GANG!"
HERE HE COMES, GUYS! I TOL'JA THE BOSS'D SHOW UP IF YOU WERE PATIENT!
ZIV MINE SHAFT #7
DANGER
SHAFT CLOSED!
by Order of U.S. Dept. of Mines
I WASN'T WORRIED, LENNY! I KNOW BLACKLUNG'S ON OUR SIDE!
YEAH... HE HATES THIS ROTTEN BURG AN' THE CREEPS INNIT ALMOST AS MUCH AS WE DO!
EVEN MORE SO, BOY! YOU ARE MERELY ROWDY REBELS, DISCONTENT WITH THE LIFE BARRENTOWN HAS TO OFFER, WHILE I-
-I HAVE HAD MY LIFE RUINED BEYOND REPAIR BY THE CITIZENS OF THIS TOWN!
BUT ENOUGH... SOON NOW, WE'LL ALL HAVE OUR REVENGE ON PITIFUL BARRENTOWN, PA! COME!
9


MEANWHILE...
S-SURE IT'S A FAST WAY TO TRAVEL, E-MAN...
...BUT COULD YOU PLEASE GROW SOME HANDLES, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD! I WASN'T PLANNIN' ON BEING SQUASHED BY A HIGH-SPEED FALL, Y'KNOW!
AND FAR BELOW THE STREETS OF BARRENTOWN...
I TRUST YOUR WAIT HASN'T BEEN TOO UNCOMFORTABLE, MS. KANE?
NAW, I ALWAYS SPEND MY NIGHTS TIED UP IN DAMP, COLD ABANDONED MINE SHAFTS!
DON'T WORRY. YOUR DISCOMFORT WILL SOON COME TO AN END!
I TAKE IT YOU'RE NOT ABOUT TO RELEASE ME UNHARMED?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
HEY, IT WAS WORTH A TRY, WASN'T IT? I...
HEY...HEY! HANDS OFF, CREEP! JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE GONNA' KILL ME DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN TAKE LIBERTIES!
OH...ER...F-FORGIVE ME! I WAS DISTRACTED BY YOUR...
...NO! I MUST KEEP MY MIND ON BUSINESS! BUT, WHAT, YOU ARE SURELY WONDERING, IS THAT BUSINESS?
"IT BEGAN YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS THE CHIEF ENGINEER FOR THE MINING COMPANY, CHARGED WITH CREATING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE MINING SAFER AND FASTER.
"THIS I DID, IN A MANNER THAT AMAZED MY EMPLOYERS -FOR I WAS OUTSTANDING AT MY WORK!


"THEN, ONE DAY, THE BARRENTOWN MINES WERE BOUGHT OUT BY A HUGE MULTINATIONAL *CONGLOMERATE*. IN APPRECIATION OF MY WORK, I WAS MADE MINES *MANAGER*, IN ADDITION TO MY OTHER DUTIES–
"–AND PAID *INCREDIBLE* SUMS OF MONEY, IN RETURN FOR WHICH THEY DEMANDED NEWER, MORE *EFFICIENT* MINING MACHINERY!
"I DELIVERED... BEGINNING WITH AN *ATOMIC POWERED HYDRAULIC EXO-SKELETON*–
"–WHICH UTILIZED *PRESSURIZED* CO_2 TO BLAST THE COAL FROM THE RICH VEINS.
"WITH IT, ONE MAN COULD MINE SEVERAL *TONS* OF COAL A DAY!
"MY INVENTION MEANT THAT A *TENTH* THE NUMBER OF MEN COULD MINE *ONE HUNDRED TIMES* THE AMOUNT OF COAL–
"–AND THAT UNPLEASANT FACT LED TO MY *DOWNFALL!*
"THE *MINERS* HEARD OF MY PLANS, AND, IN FEAR OF THE *ONLY* LIVELIHOOD *ANY* OF THEM KNEW, THEY *RIOTED*–
"–TOUCHING OFF A *MASSIVE EXPLOSION* OF VOLATILE *MINE GASES!*
"I WAS *CAUGHT* IN THAT EXPLOSION...THE FORCE OF WHICH BOMBARDED ME WITH UNBELIEVABLE AMOUNTS OF *COAL DUST!*


"I WAS LEFT FOR DEAD BURIED BENEATH UNTOLD TONS OF ROCK AND RUBBLE...MY BODY TOTALLY IMPREGNATED WITH COAL DUST...
"...BUT YET I LIVED, MY LIFE SAVED BY THE EXO-SKELETON!
"DID I SAY 'LIVED?'
"I FOUND I WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN THE VERY ACT OF BREATHING...
"...AND MY MIND...SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO IT AS WELL-BUT I COULD REMEMBER ENOUGH TO KNOW I SOUGHT VENGEANCE-"
-AND I WILL NOT BE DENIED!
Y-YOUR HAIR...WHY DOES IT INTRIGUE ME SO...?
GREAT! JUST MY LUCK, TO GET STUCK WITH A NUT WITH A HAIR FETISH!
"BUT...AFTER DIGGING MYSELF FREE, I FOUND THE MINESHAFT BLOCKED, FORCING ME TO SEEK EXIT ELSEWHERE.
"MY INFRA-RED GOGGLES HAD SURVIVED THE EXPLOSION AND CAVE-IN, ALLOWING ME TO SEE IN THE STYGIAN DARK-NESS-
"-AND LEADING ME TO A STRANGE TUNNEL...ONE, I I WAS CERTAIN EVEN THEN, NOT BUILT BY HUMAN HANDS-
"-AND FOUND MYSELF IN THE LAIR OF A... A CREATURE FROM THE NETHERWORLD, ANOTHER WORLD OR THE RESULT OF A MUTATION, I KNOW NOT!
"BUT, LIKE ME, IT WAS A CREATURE OF THE MINES...FOR IT LIVED BY EATING COAL!"
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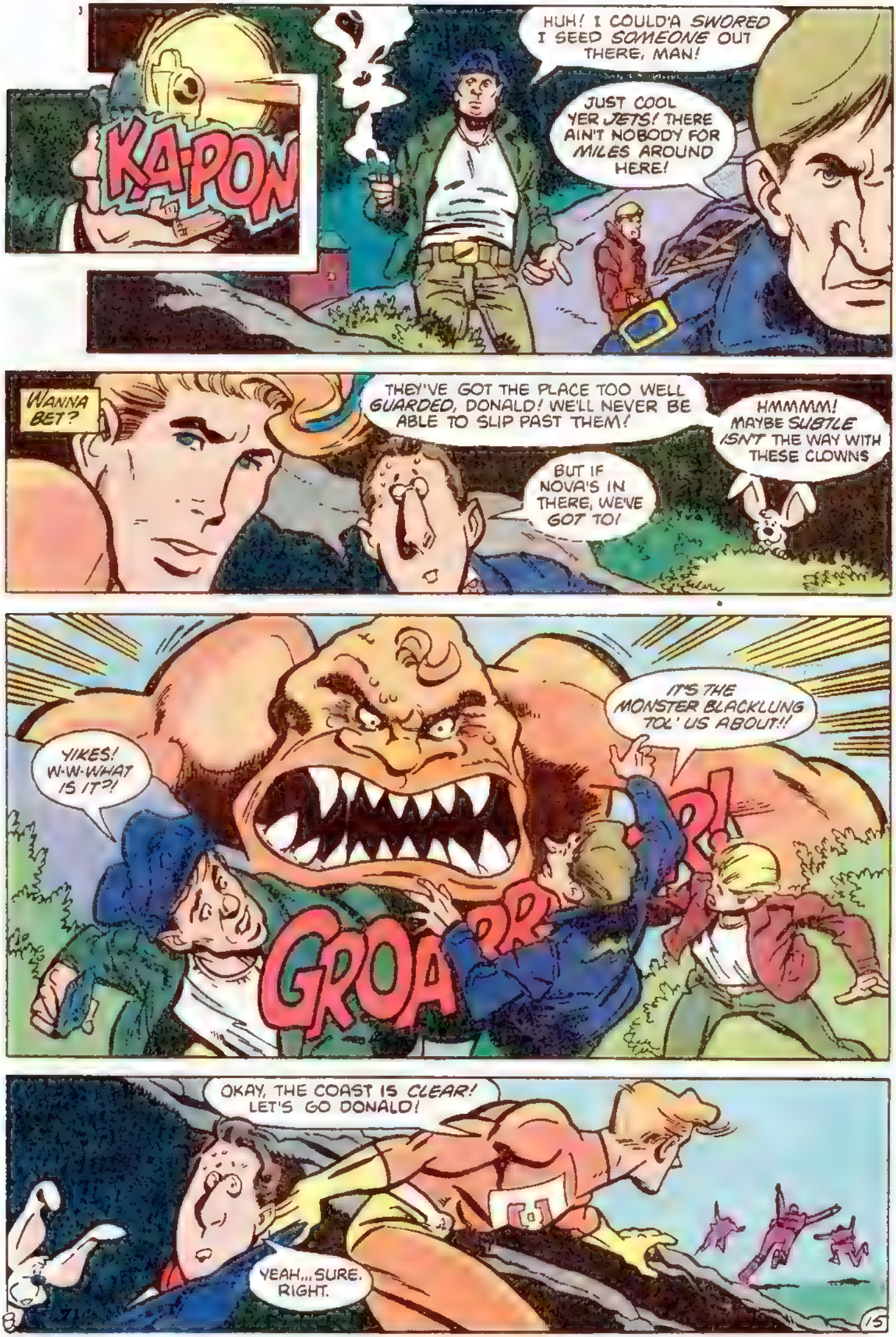
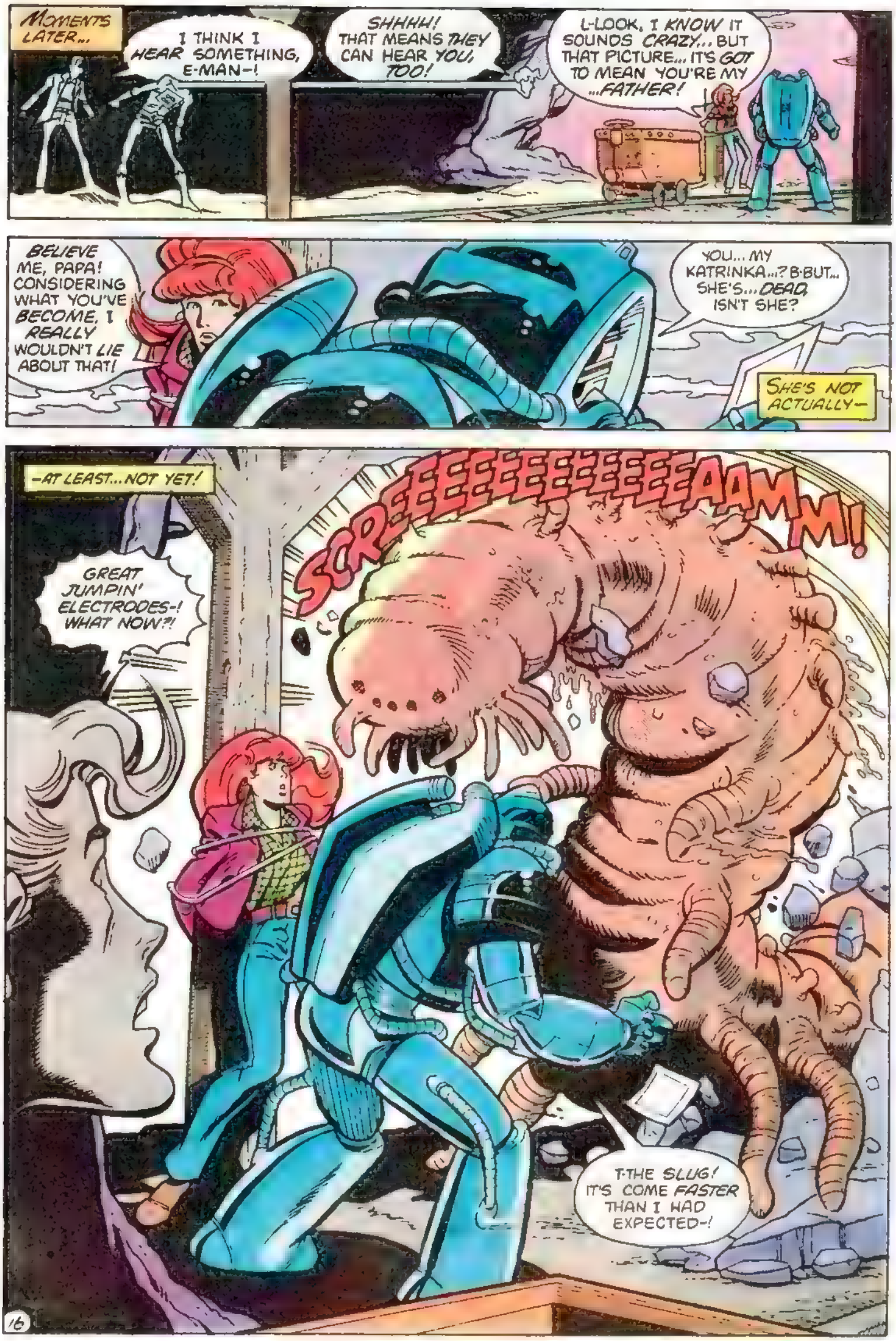
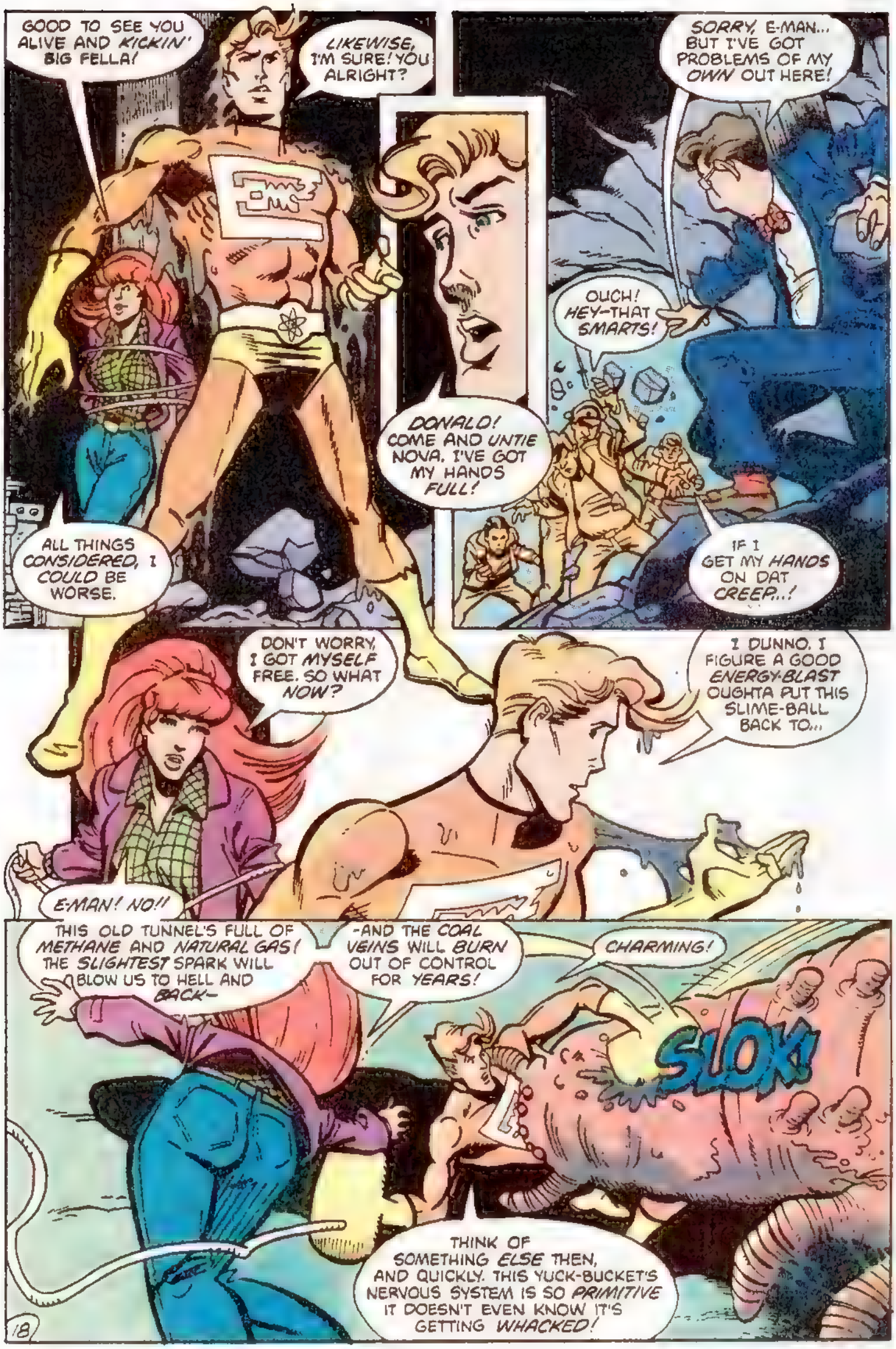
I MEMORIZED THE LOCATION OF THE SLUG'S CAVERN AND THEN RESUMED MY SEARCH FOR A WAY OUT OF THE MINES...
"...COMING, AT LAST, TO THE SURFACE!
"BUT MY COMING WAS NOT UNOBSERVED! THE MEMBERS OF THE HORNETS WERE USING THE CAVERN TO STAGE A 'BEER BLAST.'
"THE THOROUGHLY INEBRIATED YOUTHS IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO MOCK MY TATTERED DAMAGED APPEARANCE.
"ENRAGED, I SCREAMED OUT IN ANGER... AND DISCOVERED MY EXPERIENCES HAD DONE MORE THAN I COULD HAVE IMAGINED-
"-ENDOWING ME WITH THE POWER TO EMIT MIGHTY BLASTS OF SOOT FROM MY DAMAGED LUNGS!
"OUT OF FEAR, AT FIRST, THEN THROUGH THE COMMON HATRED WE SHARED FOR THE PEOPLE OF BARRENTOWN- THE BIKERS BECAME MY ALLIES-
"-HELPING ME TO OBTAIN THE MATERIALS NEEDED TO BUILD MY COMMAND CENTER AND IMPROVE UPON MY EXO-SKELETON, BUT NOW ALL IS IN READINESS...".
SOON, THE SLUG WILL BEGIN ITS RAMPAGE-
-AND EAT THE COAL... AND THUS THE VERY FOUNDATION OUT FROM BENEATH BARRENTOWN!

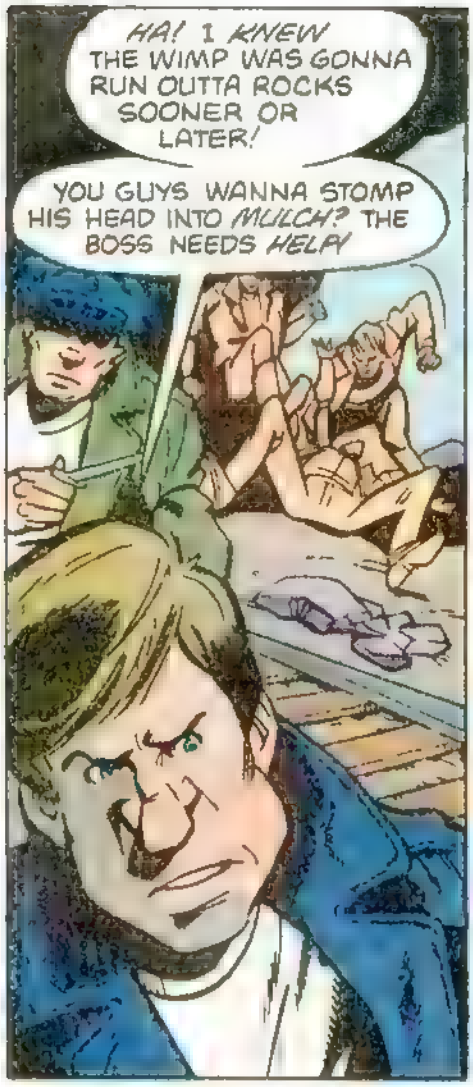
BARRENTOWN WILL COLLAPSE INTO THE EARTH LIKE THE ROTTED BLOTCH ON HUMANITY IT IS...
...AND YOU, GIRL...YOU...W-WITH THE RED HAIR...
THAT AGAIN-?!
..RED HAIR.. LIKE... I USED TO KNOW SOMEONE WITH HAIR LIKE YOURS...DIDN'T I?!
HUH?
I-IT'S SO HARD TO REMEMBER... BUT I'M SURE... EXCEPT...
...EXCEPT... THEY'RE ALL... DEAD NOW...
SO I CARE ABOUT THIS CHARACTER'S FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM...?
...I...
OHMIGOD!
PAPA?!?

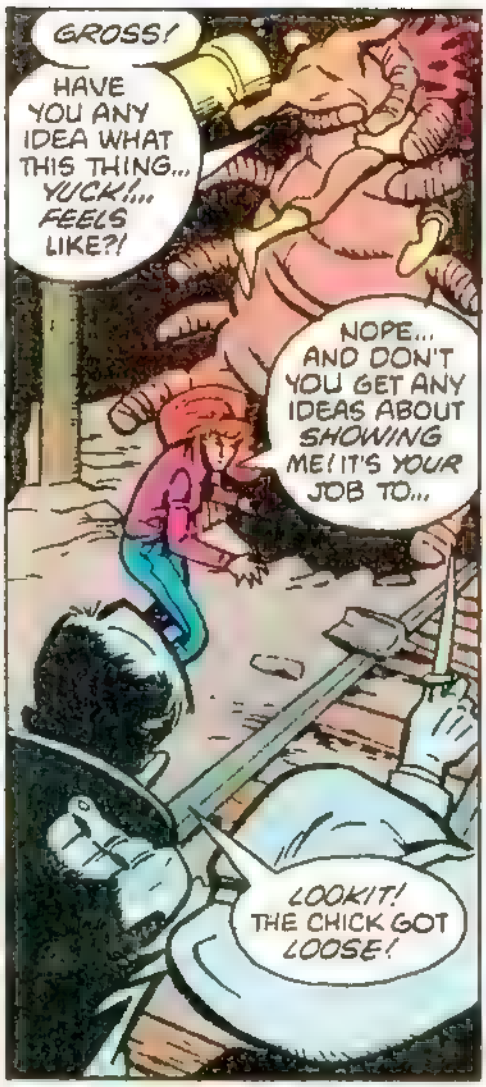

K-A-POW
HUH! I COULD'A SWORED I SEED SOMEONE OUT THERE, MAN!
JUST COOL YER JETS! THERE AIN'T NOBODY FOR MILES AROUND HERE!
WANNA BET?
THEY'VE GOT THE PLACE TOO WELL GUARDED, DONALD! WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SLIP PAST THEM!
HMMMM! MAYBE SUBTLE ISN'T THE WAY WITH THESE CLOWNS
BUT IF NOVA'S IN THERE, WE'VE GOT TO!
YIKES! W-W-WHAT IS IT?!
IT'S THE MONSTER BLACKLUNG TOL' US ABOUT!!
GROARRR!
OKAY, THE COAST IS CLEAR! LET'S GO DONALD!
YEAH... SURE. RIGHT.


MOMENTS LATER...
I THINK I HEAR SOMETHING, E-MAN-!
SHHHH! THAT MEANS THEY CAN HEAR YOU, TOO!
L-LOOK, I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY... BUT THAT PICTURE... IT'S GOT TO MEAN YOU'RE MY ...FATHER!
BELIEVE ME, PAPA! CONSIDERING WHAT YOU'VE BECOME, I REALLY WOULDN'T LIE ABOUT THAT!
YOU... MY KATRINKA...? B-BUT... SHE'S... DEAD, ISN'T SHE?
SHE'S NOT ACTUALLY-
-AT LEAST... NOT YET!
GREAT JUMPIN' ELECTRODES-! WHAT NOW?!
SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEAAMM!
T-THE SLUG! IT'S COME FASTER THAN I HAD EXPECTED-!

BACK...BACK! YOU'VE COME THE WRONG WAY-!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE EATING ALL THE COAL FROM BENEATH THE TOWN—
GOTTA GET THROUGH TO HIM... SOMEHOW...
DESTROYING ALL THOSE WHO SAW FIT TO DESTROY ME!
UNTIE ME, PAPA! IT'S COMING AFTER ME...YOUR LITTLE GIRL!
Y-YOU'RE TRYING TO CONFUSE ME! MY BABY'S DEAD, I TELL YOU!
BUT I'M HER! DO I LOOK DEAD?
ON THE OTHER HAND...
E-MAN!
YOU BELLOWED, NOVA?
THANK GOD!
SPROING
SLUKT!
NO! IT'S THAT INFERNAL ENERGY-MAN AGAIN!

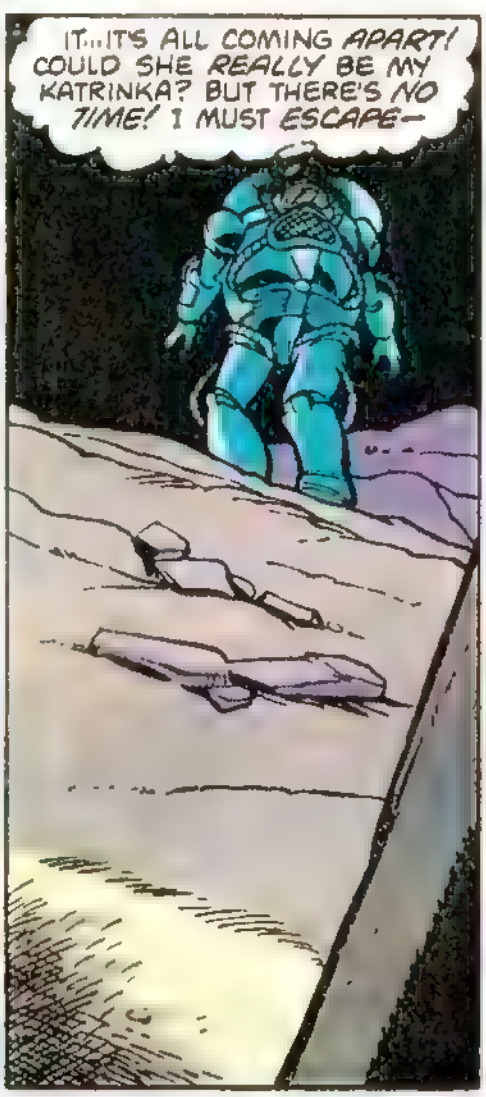

GOOD TO SEE YOU ALIVE AND KICKIN' BIG FELLA!
LIKEWISE, I'M SURE! YOU ALRIGHT?
SORRY, E-MAN... BUT I'VE GOT PROBLEMS OF MY OWN OUT HERE!
OUCH! HEY-THAT SMARTS!
DONALO! COME AND UNTIE NOVA. I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL!
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I COULD BE WORSE.
IF I GET MY HANDS ON DAT CREEP...!
DON'T WORRY, I GOT MYSELF FREE. SO WHAT NOW?
I DUNNO. I FIGURE A GOOD ENERGY-BLAST OUGHTA PUT THIS SLIME-BALL BACK TO...
E-MAN! NO!!
THIS OLD TUNNEL'S FULL OF METHANE AND NATURAL GAS! THE SLIGHTEST SPARK WILL BLOW US TO HELL AND BACK-
-AND THE COAL VEINS WILL BURN OUT OF CONTROL FOR YEARS!
CHARMING!
SLOK!
THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE THEN, AND QUICKLY. THIS YUCK-BUCKET'S NERVOUS SYSTEM IS SO PRIMITIVE IT DOESN'T EVEN KNOW IT'S GETTING WHACKED!
18


HA! I KNEW THE WIMP WAS GONNA RUN OUTTA ROCKS SOONER OR LATER!
YOU GUYS WANNA STOMP HIS HEAD INTO MULCH? THE BOSS NEEDS HELP!


GROSS!
HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT THIS THING... YUCK!... FEELS LIKE?!
NOPE... AND DON'T YOU GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT SHOWING ME! IT'S YOUR JOB TO...
LOOKIT! THE CHICK GOT LOOSE!

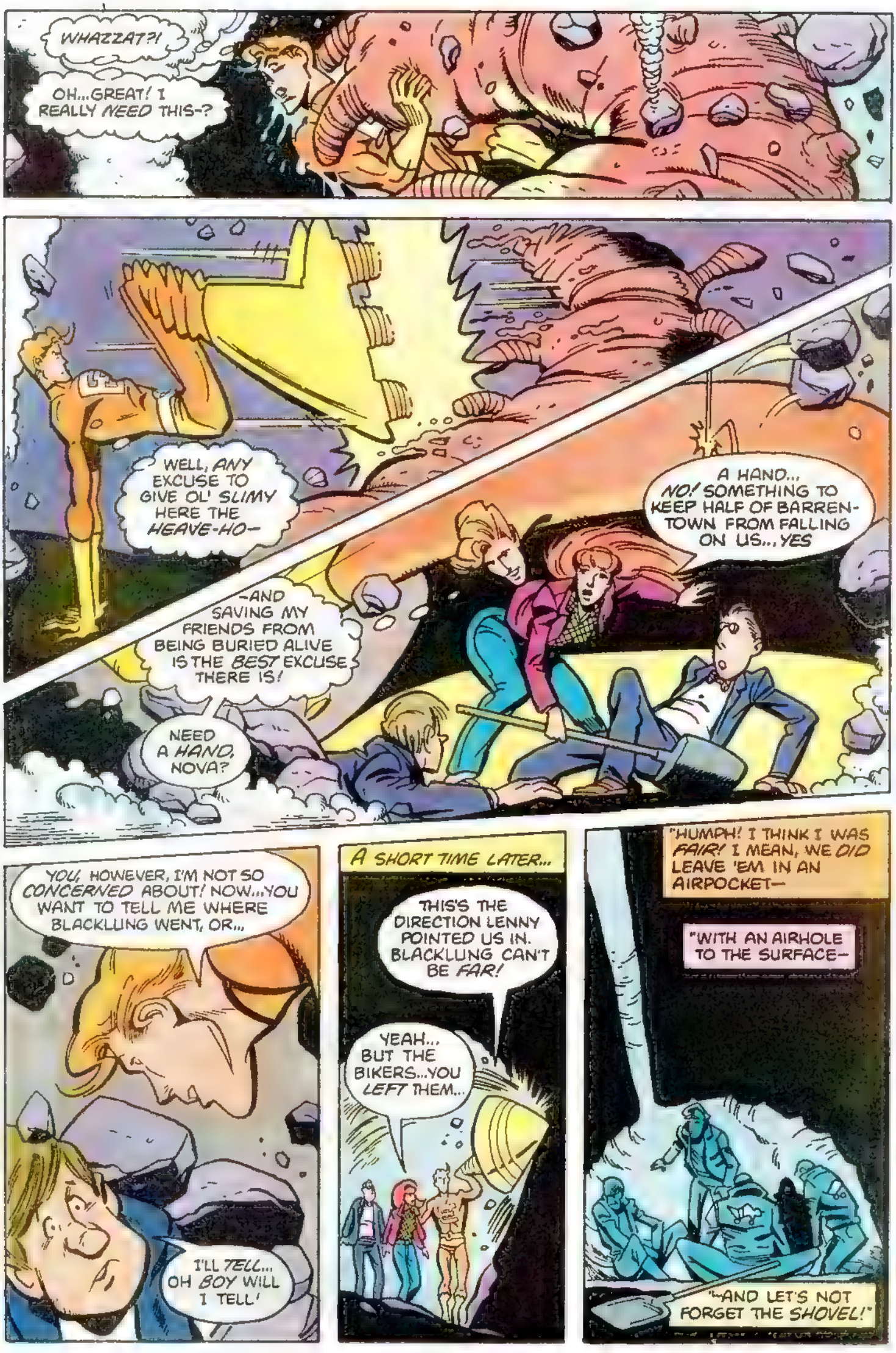
GHONK!
RIGHT THE FIRST TIME, HANDSOME... AND I'M STAYING THAT WAY!

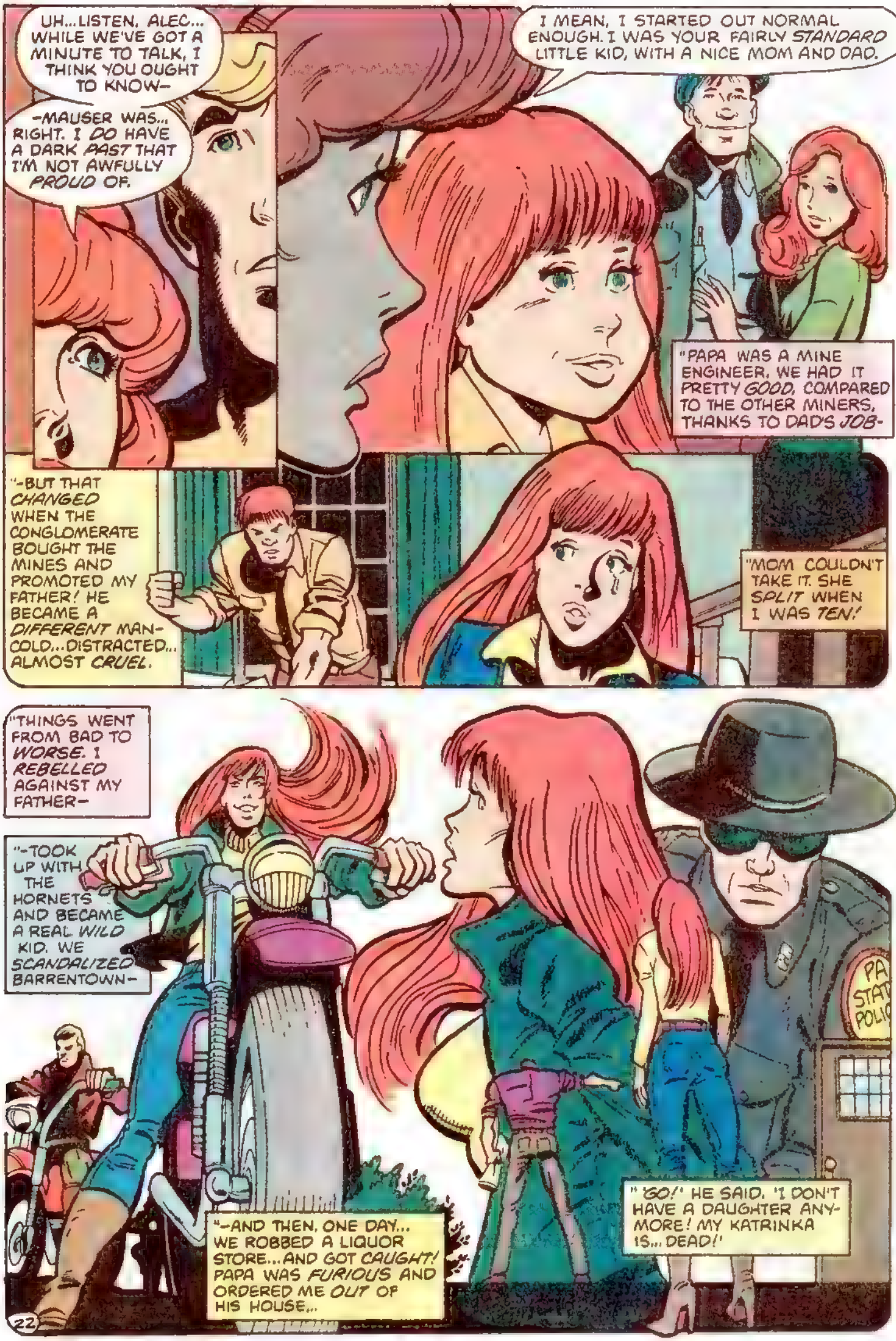
GHAK!
I THINK I'M GONNA BE ILL IF THIS BOOGIE DOESN'T STOP SPITTING JUNK ALL OVER ME!


IT...IT'S ALL COMING APART! COULD SHE REALLY BE MY KATRINKA? BUT THERE'S NO TIME! I MUST ESCAPE—

OH HURT... OH PAIN!
I DIDN'T MIND THE BRASS KNUCKLES... BUT DID THEY HAVE TO STOMP ME WITH THOSE SPIKED BOOTS...?!
WHAT...? A COAL CAR!

Y-YOU BETTER HAVE A COUPLE MORE PEOPLE AROUND TO LOOK AFTER YER TAIL, CHICKIE...CAUSE YOU CAN'T HOLD US OFF FOREVER!
TRUE,.. BUT I CAN CRACK A FEW MORE SKULLS BEFORE YOU GET ME, PEA-BRAIN!
THEY'RE CLOSING IN ON NOVA...AND THEY'RE STANDING RIGHT ON THE TRACKS!
UNNNNH! THE OLD BRAKE HANDLE'S RUSTED SHUT...CAN'T BUDGE IT! NEED A BETTER...
...GRIIIIIIIPP!
YIKES! WE'RE ROLLING... CAN'T STOP.. GONNA HIT...
KRNHAMM!
THE OLD COAL CAR HALTS, KNOCKED OFF THE TRACK BY THE INCREDIBLE IMPACT-
-WHERE IT EVERSO INNOCENTLY BUMPS A ROTTED SUPPORT BEAM-
-AND THE REST IS... CHAOS!
DONALD! MISTER... THAT WAS THE SLICKEST RESCUE I'VE EVER SEEN! WHAT PLANNING...WHAT TIMING
...WHAT DUMB LUCK!
FOOOM!
20


WHAZZAT?!
OH...GREAT! I REALLY NEED THIS-?
WELL, ANY EXCUSE TO GIVE OL' SLIMY HERE THE HEAVE-HO-
-AND SAVING MY FRIENDS FROM BEING BURIED ALIVE IS THE BEST EXCUSE THERE IS!
NEED A HAND, NOVA?
A HAND... NO! SOMETHING TO KEEP HALF OF BARRENTOWN FROM FALLING ON US... YES
YOU, HOWEVER, I'M NOT SO CONCERNED ABOUT! NOW...YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHERE BLACKLUNG WENT, OR...
I'LL TELL... OH BOY WILL I TELL!
A SHORT TIME LATER...
THIS'S THE DIRECTION LENNY POINTED US IN. BLACKLUNG CAN'T BE FAR!
YEAH... BUT THE BIKERS...YOU LEFT THEM...
"HUMPH! I THINK I WAS FAIR! I MEAN, WE DID LEAVE 'EM IN AN AIRPOCKET-
"WITH AN AIRHOLE TO THE SURFACE-
"-AND LET'S NOT FORGET THE SHOVEL!"


UH...LISTEN, ALEC... WHILE WE'VE GOT A MINUTE TO TALK, I THINK YOU OUGHT TO KNOW-
-MAUSER WAS... RIGHT. I DO HAVE A DARK PAST THAT I'M NOT AWFULLY PROUD OF.
I MEAN, I STARTED OUT NORMAL ENOUGH. I WAS YOUR FAIRLY STANDARD LITTLE KID, WITH A NICE MOM AND DAD.
"PAPA WAS A MINE ENGINEER. WE HAD IT PRETTY GOOD, COMPARED TO THE OTHER MINERS, THANKS TO DAD'S JOB-
"-BUT THAT CHANGED WHEN THE CONGLOMERATE BOUGHT THE MINES AND PROMOTED MY FATHER! HE BECAME A DIFFERENT MAN- COLD...DISTRACTED... ALMOST CRUEL.
"MOM COULDN'T TAKE IT. SHE SPLIT WHEN I WAS TEN!
"THINGS WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE. I REBELLED AGAINST MY FATHER-
"-TOOK UP WITH THE HORNETS AND BECAME A REAL WILD KID. WE SCANDALIZED BARRENTOWN-
"-AND THEN, ONE DAY... WE ROBBED A LIQUOR STORE...AND GOT CAUGHT! PAPA WAS FURIOUS AND ORDERED ME OUT OF HIS HOUSE...
" 'GO!' HE SAID. 'I DON'T HAVE A DAUGHTER ANY- MORE! MY KATRINKA IS... DEAD!'
PA STA POLI
22

"I WAS HEARTBROKEN... BUT HE GAVE ME NO CHOICE. I HITCHED TO NEW YORK, FIGURING THAT IF I WAS GONNA MAKE IT ANYWHERE, IT'D BE THERE.
"I LIVED HAND TO MOUTH, TAKING JOBS IN THE DINGIEST, SLEAZIEST FACTORIES... THE LOWEST WATERFRONT BARS... ANYTHING TO MAKE A LIVING!
"FINALLY, I DECIDED I COULDN'T LIVE LIKE THAT ANYMORE. I WANTED TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND MAKE SOMETHING OF MYSELF! I DID... DANCING TO SUPPORT MYSELF—"
BUT I SWEAR TO GOD, ALEC... I WAS NEVER A HOOKER LIKE MAUSER THINKS, AND AFTER THE LIQUOR STORE, I NEVER STOLE ANYTHING!
OH...?
SAY SOMETHING, ALEC! DON'T JUST LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!
I, ER.. DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, NOVA.
T-THEN... YOU CAN'T FORGIVE ME...?
FORGIVE YOU—? WHAT FOR?
SOB! OHHH ..YOU BIG LUG YOU!
?
23

E-MAN'S CONFUSION OVER NOVA'S REACTION ASIDE, THE TRIO FINALLY COMES TO...
BLACKLUNG! HOLD IT MISTER...YOU'RE SURROUNDED!
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT, E-MAN... KATRINKA!
T-THEN YOU DO REMEMBER ME, PAPA?
YES...IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME...SLOWLY. I KNOW YOU NOW... DAUGHTER!
OHH...:sniff:... DADDY! YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HAPPY THAT MAKES ME-!
UHHH, LOOK, I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT THERE IS A MONSTER ON THE LOOSE!
I KNOW THAT... BUT I CAN'T HELP YOU! THE CAVE-IN DAMAGED MY EQUIPMENT-
MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO RELEASE THE CARBON MONOXIDE TO RENDER IT HARMLESS!
WE CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU TO FIX IT! ISN'T THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO...?
WELL... THERE IS ONE OTHER SOURCE OF CO I MIGHT USE AGAINST IT-
BUT I'M AFRAID I HAVE NO EQUIPMENT WITH WHICH TO DELIVER IT!
JUST POINT ME TO THE STUFF, BLACKLUNG...I'M PRETTY GOOD AT IMPROVISING!
24

SPRAY NOZZLE... TANKS... GOTCHA!
THEN WE MUST WORK FAST! THE CO CANNISTERS ARE ATTACHED TO MY EXO-SKELETON...
...BUT THEY REQUIRE HYDRAULIC TANKS WITH A SPRAY NOZZLE TO DIRECT IT!
GET SET, BLACKLUNG! I'M ALMOST READY TO-
FIRE!
FHWHOOOSH!
YAAA-HOOO! IT'S WORKING, GANG! THE SLUG KEELED OVER LIKE A ROCK!
IT'S OUT, ALRIGHT... BUT WHAT'S IT DOING NOW?
LOOKS LIKE IT'S SPINNING A COCOON...GOING BACK INTO HIBERNATION!
IT...IS... GOOD THIS WAY.
WITH A SHUDDERING GASP, THE MAN CALLED BLACKLUNG TOPPLES TO THE GROUND.
25

PAPA... AAPA! WHAT'S WRONG... WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU—?!
T-THE... CO IN THE C-CANNISTERS... WAS M-MY... ;gasp; OWN SUPPLY...
;wheeze; T-THE... ACCIDENT THAT T-TURNED ME... INTO... THIS... IT... C-CHANGED ME—
—A-ALTERED M-MY... ;choke; PHYSIOLOGY... C-CAN ONLY... ;gasp;... BREATHE CO...
OHMIGOD! PAPA... THERE'S GOTTA BE MORE SOMEWHERE! WE CAN GET IT TO YOU...!
...T-TOO... LATE, D-DAUGHTER... B-BUT... KNOW THAT I... ;wheeze;... N-NEVER MEANT TO HURT YOU... I-IT WAS ALL F-FOR ...Y-YOU...
...G-GOOD... ;gasp;... BYE... MY DARLING... KATRINK...

EPILOGUE:
DAYS LATER, BACK IN NEW YORK...
SO THAT'S THE STORY, HUH? I, ER... GUESS I WAS KINDA, Y'KNOW ...WELL, NOT RIGHT ABOUT YOU, NOVA.
WHAT'RE YOU GETTING AT, MAUSER?
YOU'RE REALLY ENJOYIN' MAKIN' THIS HARD FOR ME, AIN'TCHA, KANE?
JUST SPIT IT OUT MICHAEL!
OKAY, OKAY! I WASN'T RIGHT... OKAY?
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S AS CLOSE TO "I'M SORRY" AS YOU CAN GET, MIKE.
OKAY. I ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY.
ER... UNCA MICKEY?
OH. YEAH. YOU DONE REAL GOOD TOO DONALD.
LATER STILL, AT THE RESIDENCE SHARED BY ALEC TRONN AND NOVA KANE...
BILLS, BILLS AND MORE BILLS! THEY SURE DO PILE UP IN A FEW SHORT... OH!
SAY, ER... ALEC. HOW'D YOU FEEL ABOUT LIVING IN CHICAGO?
S'OKAY BY ME, NOVA.
ER... WHAT'S A CHICAGO?

NEXT: MEET BIG AL!

E-MAIL

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Confidential to Barbara Ann Weber and W. Peter Miller: Alec and Nova have to decline the thoughtful invitation to your wedding, on account of the fact that Alec and Nova were driving from New York to Chicago at the time and Shotgun Teddy missed the turn-off to Cleveland (no pun intended). All of us wish you the best.

Dear Mike and Company,

At last the first closed captioned comic book — with sign language, yet! The saga of the Feeder is now over — for the time being — and E-Man and Nova are on the road to happiness. It is refreshing to see a superhero who doesn't spend twenty or thirty issues brooding over his love life.

I am very happy to see the direction that E-Man is taking but I am concerned over recent controversy about his "place" in the (forgive me, Marty Pasko) "First Comics Universe." For what one fan's opinion is worth, I don't want to see E-Man teamed-up with Jon Sable or Reuben Flagg or any other First Comics character. All this pap about the "richness and complexity" of the Marvel and DC Universes annoys readers like myself who like to occasionally sit down and read a comic book without having to deal with a four-color "Roots" where you have to understand all about a character's wife, aunt, mother, cousin, great grandfather, and family pet before you can make heads-or-tails of the story.

If E-Man inhabits his own little universe, that's all right by me. I'll buy and enjoy the comic even if Alec Tronn never teams-up with the Lone Ranger or Torin Mac Quillon. E-Man is great because he is unique. I don't want to see his comic turned into just another cross-over comic.

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, Kansas 67208

You won't see **E-Man** *turn into just another cross-over comic, T.E. But I'm afraid you will see a cross-over the month after next ... and I'm willing to bet you'll think that issue turns out just fine.*

You zeroed in on the problem with most recent cross-overs: the Marvel and DC Universes have become tremendously complex places where you'd have to understand all about a character's remotest family members in order to get the point. We haven't been publishing that long, and we don't have that many characters. And we don't really have a single "alternate reality." Maybe 20 years down the road, the First Comics Universe will be as complex as anybody elses, but we have the advantage of learning from their mistakes.

And, as an obnoxious American President often said, let me make one thing perfectly clear: you can have a cohesive universe wherein all your characters reside without any of the characters ever having to meet one another. I can't see us ever zotting Reuben Flagg 10,000 years into the future to meet up with Morgana Trace on (and in) Mars. And it's hard to imagine

Jon Sable ever teaming up in action with Alec Tronn. We will not force a story in order to have a team-up.

And we won't do it very often.

Dear Mike and Rick:

E-Man #7 was well done from the first page to the very last page!

Marty Pasko has not turned out to be the hot-shot author he always bragged he'd be, and I never thought of Joe Staton to be anything but a satirical cartoonist.

However, "God Told Me To" is a very real and present danger that was crafted by intelligent and sensitive hands. The story probes, it answers, it then debates, it questions, and best of all it doesn't take itself so seriously that it beats you over the head with its message.

Fear does play a large part in the programming of the video pulpit of the new religious right headed by Jerry Falwell, James Robertson, Rex Humbard, Jim Bakker and Pat Robertson, among others. Fear of the wrath of God, fear of nuclear disarmament, fear of homosexuality, fear of other religious beliefs, fear of communism, fear of love, peace, understanding and tolerance towards the aged, the infirm, the different, the free spirited, or the mentally deficient all play a part in the revelation of these video hate mongers.

Worst of all, they use funds obtained from the elderly, the poor, and various racial sects for Political Action Committees, far-right-wing movements that disenfranchise their very supporters. It will be a fine and righteous day when true Americans cut off the video pulpit before praise worthy concepts of freedom, equality, and justice are dubbed ungodly and immoral by the vindictive, antedeluvian, petty and intolerant entity known only to the realists as the immoral minority.

Thanks so very much for telling it like it is, Marty, Joe, Rick and Mike.

Professor Azimuth
Parkhurst Hotel
11 Lincoln Park
Newark, N.J. 07102

(No salutation)

It was Gene Siskel, I think, who, when reviewing the film Monsignor, suggested "when you do a film about a corrupt priest, you need to be sure it really adds something, because it's been done so many times before. It's become almost a cliche and easily becomes exploitative." I think Siskel was right, and I think on that standard E-Man #7 fails. Corrupt priest satires are pretty safe bets. If, as happens occasionally, the satiric arrow misses its intended mark and instead hits dead center of bad taste, and if some people take offense, the writer can retreat behind a familiar disclaimer: I wasn't attacking Christianity, just organized religion.

But Pasko's script indicates his ambition is greater than that disclaimer allows. The conflict of E-Man #7 is only resolved when Baker Babbitt resolves to give the church's assets "to a *secular charity*." That's Pasko's emphasis. That may be Pasko's opinion, but it can only be founded on the assumption that all Christian work is presumptively suspect.

Paul Johnson
1328C Genevieve
San Bernardino, CA 92405

Sorry I had to cut your lengthy letter, Paul, but all the stuff about Andropov, feminists, homosexuals, Dachau, the Miskito Indians, Candide and Norman Lear went right over my head, although I do wish there was space to get to your comments concerning Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

And maybe the movies take frequent stabs at corrupt preachers, but the comics medium certainly doesn't.

Dear Editor,

The only big disappointment I had with E-Man #7 was that you saw your prey, but you never pulled the trigger. What could have been an excellent piece on TV evangelists was muddled by an overly complex story of an alien being feeding on fear and trying to destroy E-Man because they once met on another planet. I think the best way for E-Man to reach his potential would be the simpler route. When you see a target like Mass-Media-Multi-Millionaire-Ministers, take your shots with cleverness instead of clutter.

Yes, I know "Mass-Media-Multi-Millionaire-Ministers" is clutter, but it's also clever.

Adam Burchess
1315 Morreene Road
Apt. 24-C
Durham, NC 27705

Not if you're a mass-media-multi-millionaire-minister, Adam.

Dear Editor,

It is I, the "Watcher of Comics." I've travelled over the vast cosmos to comment on one of the greatest inventions since television: E-Man. The seventh issue was great. Gantry Babbitt must come back soon.

A few suggestions for upcoming stories: after the X-Men parody, I was wondering if there were any plans for a Teen Titans parody? And how about a villain with some kind of energy-draining device?

Before I seal off this letter, I have a question: is it true that you are planning to cross certain books over with other First books?

Shan J. Lanham
Box 222
Aragon, GA 30104

Not if T.E. Pouncey has anothing to say about it.

As for a Teen Titans parody: maybe we could reprint **E-Man** *#2 and #3 and just change the name "F-Men" to "Teen Cretins." I think just about everything else is the same.*

Dear First:

I was wondering when Joe was going to satirize Elfquest. Tell him don't be surprised if some very big German Shepherds with funny looking kids holding sharp butter knives appear at his door one night.

Nina Twersky
14848 Manuella Rd.
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

Funny, Richard and Wendy Pini made the same comment.

NEXT MONTH: As promised, **Joe Staton** returns to the writing chores — it's now his permanent assignment — and he's bringing Master Villainess (or Mistress Villain??) Tyger Lili back.

And wait 'till you meet the ultimate Izod freak, Big Al.

E-Man #12 will be on sale same time, same place. See you then.

— Mike Gold

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MIKE MAUSER'S CRIMESTOMPER'S TEXTBOOK 1

IF YOU GOTTA GET SOME ***INFORMATION*** AND WHOEVER YOU GOTTA GET IT ***FROM*** DON'T TRUST P.I.'S...

YOU CAN GET SOME REAL NICE ***BADGES*** AT THE FIVE-AND-DIME-- THE ONES THAT SAY "MAGNUM, P.I." OR "FRIDAY, 7!4"-- THAT KIND.

LOOK OFFICIAL AND SAY "I'M WORKING WITH THE AUTHORITIES" (REMEMBER MERRIAM-WEBSTER IS AN ALTHORITY...)

FLASH 'EM THE BADGE SO ***FAST*** THEY CAN'T READ IT. CHANCES ARE, THEY'LL TELL YOU ***EVERYTHING*** YOU WANT TO KNOW.

IF THAT DON'T WORK, PISTOL-WHIP 'EM.

-MMr

TEDDY-Q'S™ HOME VIDEO REVIEW

LIKE MOST AMERICANS, OUR MANIC MARSUPIAL LIKES TO SHOOT THINGS! BUT, RATHER THAN LITTER THE LANDSCAPE WITH HIS FURRY FRIENDS, TEDDY-Q HAS TAKEN TO VIDEO GAMES! NOW HE TAKES HIS AGGRESSION OUT ON MONSTERS FROM OUTER SPACE AND MUTANT INSECTS!

REELFOOL '83